




Homeland Security

September 13, 2005

MEMORANDUM TO: DHS Employees

FROM: Michael Chertoff 

SUBJECT: Hurricane Katrina Recovery Efforts

The Department of Homeland Security is fully engaged in an unprecedented response and recovery effort as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Through FEMA, the resources and assets from all DHS component agencies, and the support of the President, we are helping people to restore their livelihoods. To those of you who lost homes or loved ones in this disaster, you have my prayers and my sympathy. To those of you working around the clock to support those on the ground and those of you risking your lives to save others in the affected region, you have my utmost respect and appreciation.

I have seen first hand the total commitment from you, the employees of the Department of Homeland Security. Whether dispensing meals, water, clothing, and wheelchairs, rescuing people through innovative means and in harrowing conditions, or providing answers to questions or a shoulder on which to lean, you are making a difference in the lives of our fellow Americans.

Here are a few notable examples of the truly tremendous work that is being done by Homeland Security employees, other federal agencies, and state and local entities, most under incredibly difficult circumstances:

- More than 70,000 response, rescue, recovery, and law enforcement personnel working around the clock
- Nearly 50,000 lives saved or rescued
- More than \$965 million provided to families and households
- Nearly 250,000 people evacuated and safely housed in shelters
- More than 58 million liters of water and 23 million MREs distributed
- 87 National Disaster Medical System Teams engaged

Many DHS employees are unselfishly going about the business of helping those in need. These efforts are having a positive impact on lives, as each day the situation improves. But know that this is a long-term commitment—one that will stretch into the weeks and months ahead. Many of you have answered the call to volunteer in the affected areas, and I thank you for your service.

Our mission calls us to remain ever vigilant. Last Sunday, we remembered and honored the lives lost on September 11, 2001, and were reminded that the threat of terrorism is ever present. As we continue our response and recovery effort in the Gulf Coast region, we must also be prepared to deal with terrorist attacks or additional natural disasters. That is why the work of all DHS employees is so important. I am extremely proud of the work you are doing, and I thank you for your commitment and dedication at this critical time.

The Department of Homeland Security is a special place—a place where you can really make a difference in the lives of others. The sacrifices you have made thus far have been exemplary, but additional challenges await us. You will continue to be called upon to make a difference because you are the best at what you do.

Keep up the great work.